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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the Student Affairs profession at private colleges in the state of Iowa. One hundred fifty-nine Chief Student Affairs Officers at 22 private colleges responded to a questionnaire that asked about the following items: how they spent their days (i.e., percent of time spent on student contact, administrative tasks, developing new ideas and programs, and professional development activities); salary and salary satisfaction; and feelings about the profession (special interests and likes and dislikes). Among findings was that the majority of their day was spent on student contact and administrative tasks. The majority of those responding indicated no advancement, poor salary, lack of faculty acceptance of Student Affairs as a profession, long hours, and campus politics as areas of dislike about their jobs. The single largest complaint mentioned was low salary: 60 percent of the respondents were very unsatisfied, unsatisfied or at best uncertain about their salary satisfaction level. The largest discrepancy in salary was that between men and women; men earned on average $4,000 more per year than women. The report notes that the study was successful in identifying, categorizing, and explaining specific groups and variables within the profession, and that it provides possible direction for future research or at the very least some explanations in regard to the prediction of job satisfaction. Contains 11 references. (GLR)

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THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL: A STUDY OF THE PRIVATE COLLEGES IN IOWA

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If one thing can be said of the Student Affairs profession it is that those involved in it are always trying to define and explain their profession to others and at times even to themselves. For example, during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's professionals spent much of their time seeing to it that others viewed Student Affairs as a profession. Student Affairs professionals were on the defensive. Darley and Wren (1949) stated that Student Affairs failed the test of a profession in six of their eight criteria. Penny (1967) concluded that Student Affairs was not a profession because it failed to meet five standards; such as quality of literature and respect by faculty. In the 1970's and even the early 1980's those in the profession were concerned with what name the profession should go by; ie: Student Affairs, Student Services, Student Life, College Student Personnel, Student Development, etc. Miller and Prince (1975) and Crookston (1976) all suggested that the term College Student Personnel is outdated and should be replaced by Student development. Part of the attack on College Student Personnel may be caused by a lack of understanding of the work that is performed. Rhatigan (1975) makes the point that the failure of the Student Personnel workers to document their past has aided some of the critics of the Student Personnel label. In recent years the Student Affairs profession seems to be less interested in outside distractions and more concerned about the professional and about the relationships between the employee and the organization, the employee and other employees and the employee and self.

A body of literature has emerged regarding the attrition of Student Affairs professionals, career advancement, staff development and job satisfaction. Much of the literature is suggesting high attrition and low job satisfaction. Bender (1980) in a National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) survey found that 36% of the respondents indicated that they intended to continue in Student Affairs, 39% reported indecision and 25% said they did not intend to stay in Student Affairs. Burns (1988) surveyed Student Affairs professionals who had received their

degrees between 1970 and 1979. Of the 182 respondents 40% had left the field.

In a review of the literature Evans (1988) reported a lack of opportunity for personal growth, scholarly pursuits and a lack of an opportunity to use knowledge. Evans suggests that these factors contribute to the high attrition rate of Student Affairs professionals.

Since attrition and the subsequent training of new staff translates into added cost it is important to become familiar with how the Student Affairs professional views the profession and perhaps more importantly what does attrition and low job satisfaction say about the profession in general. The purpose of this paper is to examine the Student Affairs profession at private colleges in the state of Iowa. The following questions served as a research guide.

1. What is the demographic make-up of the student affairs professional; ie: age, sex, marital status, children, race, education, experience.
2. What are professionals concerned about; ie: work day, salary, special interests, likes, dislikes.
3. Is their a relationship between salary and job satisfaction?
4. Is their a relationship between the factors professionals perceive as important and how adequately those factors are being met.
5. Is it possible to predict job satisfaction?

METHOD

Sample

Twenty questionnaires and envelopes were mailed to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) at 26 private colleges in the state of Iowa. All 26 private colleges were members of the Iowa Student Personnel Association (ISPA). The CSAO's were asked to distribute the questionnaire and envelopes to their staff. Each staff person

was asked to complete the questionnaire, seal it in the envelope and return it to the CSAO. The CSAO then returned the questionnaires and envelopes in a large stamped, addressed envelope that was provided. Of the 26 private colleges contacted, 22 or 84.6% of the schools responded. Collectively, 159 Student Affairs professionals (N=159) completed a questionnaire. The mean age of respondents was 36.65 years. Of the respondents 44% were males and 94.3% were white. The mean experience level was 6.97 years.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to gather information about Student Affairs professionals. The questionnaire obtained information about gender, age, marital status, children, race, degree and experience.

Respondents were asked how they spent their day. What percent of their day was spent on student contact, administrative tasks (phone calls, reports, supervising others, etc.), developing new ideas and programs, and on professional development (classes, seminars, journals, workshops, etc.).

Two questions were directly related to salary. Respondents were asked to check the appropriate range that was closest to their own salary. There were eleven ranges that began with 10,000 -11,999 and ended with over 30,000. Another question apropos of salary attempted to ascertain salary satisfaction . A five point Likert Scale ranging from very unsatisfied to very satisfied was used.

An attempt was made to determine how professionals felt about the profession. Questions were asked about what their special interest were; ie: alcohol abuse, racism, date rape, womens issues, etc. Two additional questions were concerned with what they liked and disliked about the profession. Spaces were provided for three write in responses for both likes and dislikes.

In an attempt to determine satisfaction, professionals were asked how

important the following twelve job characteristics were.

Opportunity to be creative and original

Opportunity to work with students

Opportunity to earn a good deal of money

Social status and prestige

Relative freedom from supervision of others

Opportunity for advancement

Opportunity for a stable and secure future

Fringe benefits

Variety in work

Responsibility

Control over what they do

Challenge

Respondents were asked to rate each question twice. Once for importance and once on how adequately these job characteristics are being met. A five point Likert Scale was used. The scale ranged from very unimportant to very important and from very inadequate to very adequate.

The concluding question asked how satisfied they were with their positions. Again, a five point Likert Scale was used. Choices ranged from very unsatisfied to very satisfied.

RESULTS

Items pertinent to the demographic make-up of the professionals, such as, marital status, children, race, education level and whether or not professionals would like to change positions in Student Affairs are displayed in Table 1. Table 1 shows the frequency distributions and the percentage associated with each variable. Over one -half of the respondents 89 are married and 73 have children. The majority of the respondents are white. Only six percent are Black. Of the 94 Masters Degrees 41 or

44% are within the area of College Student Personnel or Higher Education Administration. Of the 18 reporting Doctorates only 3 or 16% were in the area of Higher Education Administration. Doctorates ranged from Elementary Education, Psychology and Theology to Recreation and Counseling. A significant number of professionals 33 or 20.8% would like to get into a new area of Student Affairs.

Salary

Salary and salary satisfaction are important considerations in any profession. An attempt was made to determine salary and salary satisfaction levels and then associate those levels with age and experience. Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages associated with the eleven salary levels and the five salary satisfaction levels. Medians and means of age and experience within the various levels are also presented.

The largest percentage of respondents are earning over 30,000 dollars (16.4%). This may be true because most of the CSAO's at the 21 colleges completed a questionnaire. It makes sense that they would be on the upper end of the scale in salary, (age $x = 46.53$) and experience ($x = 16.38$). In almost all cases as mean age and experience increase so do salaries.

As expected, salary satisfaction was a concern for most professionals. Of the respondents, 66 or 41.5% were either satisfied or very satisfied with their salary. On the other end of the scale however, 70 or 44% were either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. As expected as the mean of age and experience increase so does salary satisfaction.

Table 3 attempts to describe the association between salary, salary satisfaction and job satisfaction with men and women. Almost one-half of the women (49.4%) fell into the first four salary categories - - below 18,000 dollars. In direct contrast, almost one-half of the men (48.6) fell into the upper four salary ranges - - 24,000 dollars and above. The mean salary for men was 7.014 and 4.966 for women, or 22,000 -

23,999 dollars for men and 18,000-19,999 for women - - a 4,000 dollar difference. The same holds true when the means are examined; value seven for men value 5 for women.

The difference in salaries is reflected in salary satisfaction levels. 51.7% of the women are unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with their salary. This compares to 34.3% for men.

Part of the questionnaire was designed to determine the age and experience level of the professionals and how they spent their day. Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviations of each variable. In addition, the Pearson Product Moment Correlations (r) for each variable in association with job satisfaction and salary satisfaction are presented.

The average professional was 36.65 years old and had almost seven years of experience. The mean salary was 5.9 which translates most closely with the salary range 20,000 - 21,999. The average professional spends 46% of their day on student contact and 34.817 percent on administrative tasks. Interestingly enough only 12.68 % of the day is spent developing new ideas or programs and only 5.7% of the day was spent on professional development. The standard deviations for each variable show a large degree of variance.

None of the variables are highly correlated with job satisfaction or salary satisfaction. Experience has an r of .3265 in association with salary satisfaction. None of the variables correlate well with job satisfaction. Many of the variables are statistically significant; Alpha ($p < .05$). Even though the correlations may be statistically significant because the Alpha level is $p < .05$ it may not be practically significant because of the low correlations.

Predicting Job Satisfaction

Tables 5 and 6 show the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for the three predictor variables (n=159); P in (.05), P out (.10). The regression model is Y =

X1(.294876) + X2 (.197119) + X3 (.259880) + .820423. In Table 5 R square indicates that approximately 18% of the variance in the dependent variable (job satisfaction) is attributable to the combined predictor variables; namely adequate challenge, the importance of working with students and salary satisfaction. Note that the R squared is only slightly larger then the Adjusted R squared. This is do to the relatively large number of observations and small number of predictor variables.

Table 6 shows the means of the dependent variable (Y) job satisfaction and the three predictor variables. Notice the low correlations between the predictor variables. This is consistent and desireable with Multiple Regression.

In response to the question what do you like about the Student Affairs profession the overwhelming responses were helping students grow and develop, stimulating work environment and variety.

When asked what do you dislike about the profession the majority of the responses centered around no advancement, poor salary, lack of faculty acceptance of Student Affairs as a profession, long hours and campus politics.

As expected, Student Affairs professionals have many special interests. The respondents most often named multi-cultural issues, wellness, womens issues, substance abuse and racism.

Discussion

The large response rate, 85%, shows that CSAO's and Student Affairs professionals at private colleges in Iowa are interested in the practical side of their profession. Their responses show they are interested in the profession in terms of how they relate to themselves, each other, the organization and the profession in general.

Berdie (1966) listed several purposes of Student Personnel work. Some of the purposes included humanizing and individualizing higher education and promoting educational growth in college. Mueller (1961) spoke of providing a spiritualism in terms of student satisfaction and felt moral attitudes and values must be an integral

part of the physical and emotional well being of students. The responses of the professionals in the study seem to echo Berdie's and Mueller's ideas of Student Personnel work. Phrases like helping students grow, support system for students, retention, cultural diversity and community and environment were mentioned over and over again by respondents.

Part of the study was concerned with how professionals spent their day. It was interesting that they spent the majority of their day on student contact and administrative tasks. Only 12.68% of each day was spent on developing new ideas and programs. In addition, only 5.7% of each day was spent on professional development. These percentages reflect the concern respondents showed when they answered; What do you dislike about the profession. Phrases that continually came up were too many hours spent on paper work, no time to grow professionally and limited by the work load.

The highest correlations occurred between percent of the day spent on student contact and percent of the day spent on administrative tasks with salary satisfaction. Those variables seem significant in how professionals view salary satisfaction. Although significant at the $p < .05$ the correlations probably aren't high enough to be practically significant.

The results associated with salary and salary satisfaction are very interesting. The student showed and predictably so, that generally speaking, the older and more experience a professional has is related to the amount of money earned. The single largest dislike mentioned for the profession was low salary. This is demonstrated by the fact that 60% of the respondents are very unsatisfied, unsatisfied or at best uncertain about their salary satisfaction level.

The largest concern or discrepancy in salary was that between men and women. Men earn on average 4,000 dollars more per year than women. An explanation may be because the CSAO's at the majority of the 21 colleges reporting are undoubtedly men at the upper level of the pay range. In the top 3 pay ranges

there were 32 men and only 13 women.

Women also spoke out loudly about their salary satisfaction - - specifically, their lack of it. They are not satisfied by a large number. Surprisingly, the low score in salary satisfaction is not present to a large degree in total job satisfaction.

The majority of the statistical analysis associated with this study centered around Multiple Regression. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to predict job satisfaction. The three variables best suited for the regression equation were adequate challenge, salary satisfaction and importance of working with students. The regression equation accounts for only 18% of the variance associated with the dependent variable, job satisfaction. In other words, the total sum of squares was 147.24. This represents the squared error that would occur if only the mean of the dependent variable (Y) (job satisfaction) was used as a predictor. Using the three previously mentioned variables as predictors the error is reduced by .17963%.

Although the actual percentage may be low it is certainly better than zero. Professionals can perhaps use the data to better understand the variables that make up their own job satisfaction. It is logical that if job satisfaction can be partial or totally explained then professionals can set out to increase it. Likewise supervisors interested in employee job satisfaction can better address the needs of their staff - - thus increasing moral and productivity.

Suggestions for further study are numerous. A study could concentrate on predicting job satisfaction. Some possible variables that this study revealed are salary satisfaction, gender, age, years in profession, opportunity for creativity, or professional development.

An obvious continuation of this study would be the difference between men and women professionals. There was a decisive and distinct difference between salaries. What needs do men and women have and how are they different and are they being met?

An area of possible concern is in the area of cultural diversity. A majority of

the 159 respondents mentioned something related to cultural diversity and minorities. Yet, of the 159 respondents at 21 different colleges only 6 are Black. An area of study would ask the question why. If cultural diversity and minority issues are really a concern why are only 9 of the 159 respondents non-white? Perhaps this is an environmental issue. Do the rural and small communities, usually associated with private colleges in Iowa, somehow impact the number of minority staff?

In summary, this study attempted to answer specific research questions associated with Student Personnel professionals at private colleges in Iowa. The study was successful in identifying, categorizing and explaining specific groups and variables within the profession. It may be said that readers of this study learned who makes up the profession, how they spend their day, what is important to them and what they like and dislike about the profession. In addition the study provided a possible direction for future research or at the very least some explanations in regard to the prediction of job satisfaction

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TABLE 1

	Frequency	Percentage
	f	%
Marital Status		
Married	89	56
Single	70	44
Children		
Children	73	45.9
No children	86	54.1
Race		
White	150	94.4
Black	6	3.8
Hispanic	1	.6
Asian	1	.6
Other	1	.6
Degree		
Bachelors	47	29.6
Masters	94	59.1
Doctorate	18	11.3
Different Position		
Yes	33	20.8
No	126	79.2

TABLE 2

	Frequency	Percentage	Age		Experience	
Salary Level	f	%	median	$\bar{x}$	median	$\bar{x}$
10,000 - 11,999	23	14.5	26	31.20	2	2.09
12,000 - 13,999	14	8.8	26	32.23	3	4.69
14,000 - 15,999	9	5.7	26	35.88	3.5	3.86
16,000 - 17,999	18	11.3	32	33.70	4.5	4.33
18,000 - 19,999	15	9.4	31	32.26	4	5.47
20,000 - 21,999	12	7.5	33.5	36.75	5.5	7.42
22,000 - 23,999	13	8.2	40	37.46	5	5.46
24,000 - 25,999	10	6.3	35.5	35.70	5	7.60
26,000 - 27,999	11	6.9	37	38.72	8	9.54
28,000 - 29,999	8	5.0	36	41.50	5.5	5.25
Over 30,000	26	16.4	46	46.53	15.0	16.38
Salary Satisfaction						
Very unsatisfied	25	15.7	30	33.48	4	4.72
Unsatisfied	45	28.3	33	34.62	4	5.13
Undecided	23	14.5	32.5	36.95	4	6.18
Satisfied	51	32.1	35	37.35	5	9.25
Very satisfied	15	9.4	48	46.06	9	12.93

TABLE 3

		Men		Women	
Salary	Value	f	%	f	%
10,000 - 11,999	1	7	10	16	17.9
12,000 - 13,999	2	3	4.3	11	12.4
14,000 - 15,999	3	2	2.9	7	7.9
16,000 - 17,999	4	8	11.4	10	11.2
18,000 - 19,999	5	9	12.9	6	6.7
20,000 - 21,999	6	3	4.3	9	10.1
22,000 - 23,999	7	4	5.7	9	10.1
24,000 - 25,999	8	2	2.9	8	9.0
26,000 - 27,999	9	8	11.4	3	3.4
28,000 - 29,999	10	3	4.3	5	5.6
Over 30,000	11	21	30.0	5	5.6
		$\bar{x}$ = 7.014 median = 7		$\bar{x}$ = 4.966 median = 5.00	
Salary Satisfaction					
Very unsatisfied	1	9	12.9	16	18
Unsatisfied	2	15	21.4	30	33.7
Uncertain	3	9	12.9	14	15.7
Satisfied	4	29	41.4	22	24.7
Very satisfied	5	8	11.4	7	7.9
		$\bar{x}$ = 3.171 median = 3		$\bar{x}$ = 2.7 median = 2	
Job Satisfaction					
Very unsatisfied	1	6	8.6	4	4.5
Unsatisfied	2	4	5.7	4	4.5
Uncertain	3	6	8.6	11	12.4
Satisfied	4	39	55.7	42	47.2
Very satisfied	5	15	21.4	28	31.5
		$\bar{x}$ = 3.757 median = 4		$\bar{x}$ = 3.966 median = 4	

TABLE 4

Variable	$\bar{x}$	$\sqrt{\frac{ss}{(n-1)}}$	r job satisfaction	r salary satisfaction
Age	36.65	10.32	-.0143 P=.429	.2743 P=.000*
Experience	6.97	7.00	.0114 P=.443	.3265 P=.000*
Work day				
% on student contact	46.075	22.29	.0140 P=431	.3164 P=.000*
% on adm. tasks	34.817	19.95	.0248 P=.378	.3047 P=.000*
% on developing new programs and ideas	12.68	9.18	-.0869 P=.138	.0746 P=.175
% on professional development	5.7	5.5	-.0590 P=.249	.0914 P=.126
Salary	5.9	3.4	.0692 P=.193	.4565 P=.000*

* P<.05

TABLE 5

Multiple R	.42383
R Square	.17963
Adjusted R Square	.16376
Standard Error	.97466

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	SIG T
AChallenge	.294876	.098440	.224760	2.995	.0032
Salary Satisfaction	.197119	.061998	.234049	3.179	.0018
IOpportunity to work w/ students	.259880	.093693	.205325	2.774	.0062
(Constant)	.820823	.567334		1.446	.1502

TABLE 6

	Y job satisfaction	X_1 challenge	X_2 salary satisfaction	X_3 opportunity to work with students
Mean $\bar{x}$	3.8742	4.3522	2.9119	4.6038
$s=\sqrt{\frac{ss}{(n-1)}}$	1.0658	.8124	1.2698	.8421
Y	1.00 P=.000	.3000 P=.000	.2677 P=.000	.2403 P=.001
X_1	.3000 P=.000	1.00 P=.000	.1652 P=.019	.1775 P=.013
X_2	.2677 P=.000	.1652 P=.019	1.00 P=.000	-.0210 P=.396
X_3	-.0210 P=.396	.1775 P=.013	.0210 P=.396	1.000 P=.000